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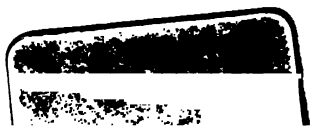
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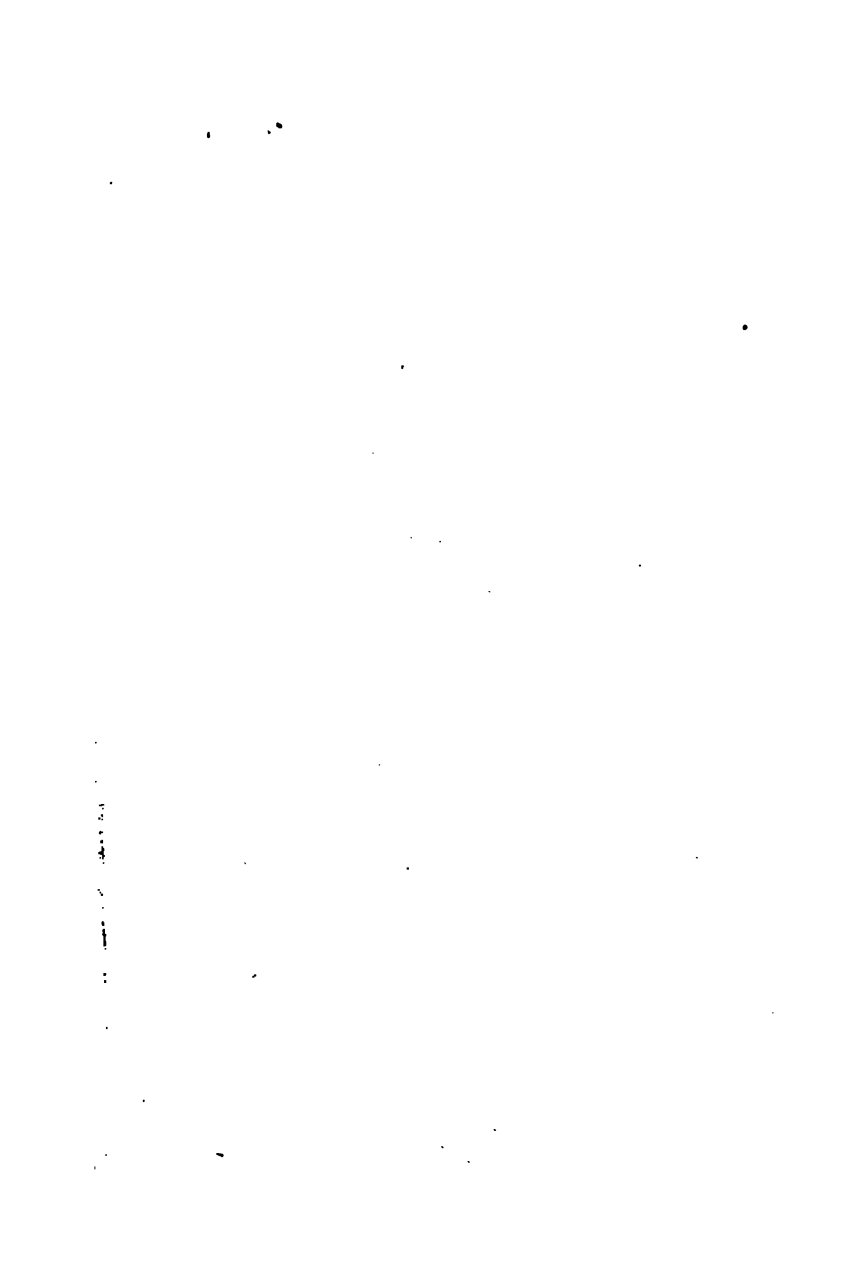
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THE IMPORTANCE
OF
Church Music

SHOWN FROM

THE PRINCIPLES OF NATURE,
THE TESTIMONY OF SCRIPTURE,
AND
THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE LITURGY.

BY THE

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Preface.

THE following Essay on *The Importance of Church Music* was written, as now published, in the form of a Lecture to the Members of the Church Institution of Bradford, delivered in June last, as introductory to the formation of a CHURCH CHORAL SOCIETY; the object of which is "to cultivate an improved knowledge and practice of Church Music in particular, and music of a sacred character in general, by Lectures, Lessons, and Exercises."

The Author has been induced, at the earnest request of some who heard it, to give it a less evanescent character, with the hope that it may lead others into whose hands it may fall to make similar efforts to heighten the standard of musical expression in Churches where improvement is desirable. Few Churches are without some one or more persons skilled in music and singing, who could undertake the office of a guide or precentor, if not a professed master of the science. Let the Clergy set forth the importance of its being done, as a matter which concerns the honour of God; and surely many, of the younger members of the congregation especially, would be found to concur in any suitable plan. Let them be enrolled as members of a

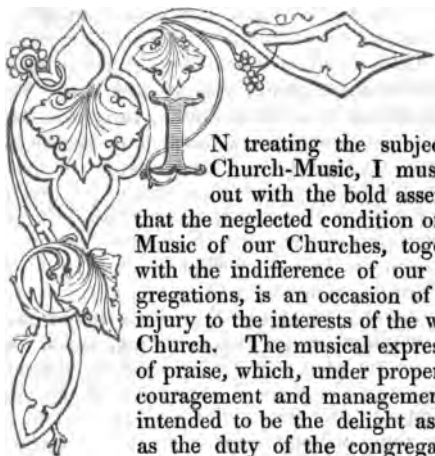
PREFACE.

Church Choral Society, meet weekly in the Church or elsewhere—begin with the simplest Church melodies—whether chants or psalm-tunes; let the appointed precentor classify them according to the character of their respective voices—then subdivide according to present capability. Let those who can read music practise any tune, chant, or anthem first—the rest listening in silence, till they have acquired some acquaintance with it, and afterwards endeavour to join in it. At the same time it will be necessary that there should be simultaneous lessons weekly to those who have not acquired the art of reading music.

Under some such regulations, superintended by the Clergy, and directed by a skilful hand, any congregation may be effectually trained to sing universally and to sing well.

It may also be observed, that the interest being once enlisted in Sacred Music, a foundation would be laid for a sound taste in music. Good Ecclesiastical Music would be loved beyond every other class; and the rising generation would learn to delight rather in the chorus of praise to God in his house, than in the trashy specimens too generally used in their hours of recreation.

*St. Jude's, Bradford,
August, 1844.*



IN treating the subject of Church-Music, I must set out with the bold assertion that the neglected condition of the Music of our Churches, together with the indifference of our congregations, is an occasion of vast injury to the interests of the whole Church. The musical expression of praise, which, under proper encouragement and management, is intended to be the delight as well as the duty of the congregation, has become almost a matter of distaste ; and instead of being, as it ought, and as it would, a source of attraction to the House of God, its neglected state rather tends to repel and drive many to other assemblies where they can realise more of the joyous aspect of Christian worshippers. Thus bad taste in

music is encouraged in other assemblies, because it is preferable to no taste; and partly on this account, the consecrated Sanctuary is frequently scantily attended, while the conventicle is crowded.

It is high time that due attention be given to a matter of such scriptural importance as uttering and shewing forth the praises of God. It is the leading idea of public worship, to offer praise and adoration to the Most High. This forms as it ought to do, the most prominent part of the public services of the Church; and is intended to excite in us suitable emotions of awe, reverence and love. It will be my object to point out and prove, that Music prompts the expression of praise, and aids the spirit of devotion: that it renders the sacred act of worship a pleasure instead of a weariness: and that thus, when due attention is given to the cultivation of sacred music and song, both as to its style and execution, the House of God becomes a scene of holy delight rather than of stern duty. Let our congregations, especially the junior members, be but disciplined aright in this matter, and we may easily reform what is justly a matter of complaint. By restoring the musical expression of our admirable liturgy, so far as circumstances allow, and taking some pains to arrive at correct harmony among our congregations, I feel assured that the effect would be to bring to public worship constantly many who only attend occasionally; others who are content to come once only on the Sunday, would make it convenient to attend as often as opportunity is afforded them; and many who count

the service of God a weariness because it is dull, would soon be attracted by the sublime and joyous aspect the House of God would present.

It is true that in many Churches great pains are taken to obtain from a stipendiary choir something like good music; and here and there we find an organist who is well skilled, and has cultivated a sound taste: but even this amount of excellence is rare. What we want, however, is not merely correct singing in the choir, but that general, nay universal participation in this sacred work of praise, which fills the House of God with divine harmony, and presents to the Lord our God a suitable oblation. We want to overcome the listless indifference, the fastidious fear of being heard to sing, the fancied incapacity, and the desire of being amused or delighted with the performance of the choir. We want to impress upon all *the duty* of singing the praises of God.

I am desirous therefore of directing your attention to the importance of this matter: and I propose to do so by setting before you sundry considerations which I hope will satisfy you, as they do me, that Music, as connected with divine worship, is not the insignificant matter which some suppose it to be, but that it is worthy of a degree of attention which it has very partially received, and of some pains-taking among every congregation of Christian worshippers.

I propose, then, to adduce the following considerations in support of my proposition that Church Music is important:

1. The mutual adaptations of nature point out to us what is the proper expression of the praises of God.
2. Musical sounds producing certain effects upon our feelings, musical instruments are an excitement to our hearts, prompting us to the expression of the praises of God.
3. Holy Scripture records the use of Music and sanctions its employment.
4. The construction of our Liturgy evidently requires it.

These considerations will I trust be sufficient to satisfy us of the importance of the Music of the Church, and will lead me to urge upon you the importance of *cultivating* it.

I. The mutual adaptations of nature point out to us what is the proper expression of the praises of God.

When God created the world, he adapted all things with infinite skill and wisdom to one another so as to produce one harmonious whole. The infinite number of parts, like the materials of a noble edifice, were fitted and dovetailed together, so that they should give mutual and universal satisfaction. Among the individual elements of man's satisfaction and happiness is melodious sound: and as light is made for the eye, and the eye for light, so sound is made for the ear, and the ear for sound. There is a mutual adaptation of the one to the other.

At the same time, all things were created to give glory to God their Creator; to shew forth his praise,

each by its own peculiar expression of that praise. Thus, the Psalmist, after enumerating the chief of God's works, calling upon them severally to praise the Lord, sums up his invocations, by saying "Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord." Every thing, then, that God has created has a capability of its own for praising God, and is required to bear its testimony for God its author. Even the silent unvoiced objects of nature have *their* expression. The varied beauties of colour, as in the rainbow and the flowers of the field and garden—the magnificent heavenly bodies revolving in boundless space—the varied tints and blending beauties of the landscape—the symmetry of form, delicacy of texture, the skilful mechanical contrivance in every gradation of the animate world, and the noble grandeur of the bolder objects of the inanimate world: all, as they meet the eye bespeak the praises of him who made them, calling forth our admiration, and an almost involuntary ascription of adoration.

In like manner, the varied sounds of nature's melody, as they fall upon the ear, express audibly the praises of God, and excite pleasing emotions in our minds. The varied tones of the living creatures—the cheerful warbling of some of the feathered tribes—the plaintive song of others—the lowing of the cattle and the bleating of the sheep—even the busy hum of insects—and the mingled harmony of all, as we gaze upon the pastoral landscape, create in us a lively sensation of pleasure, and lead our minds from nature up to nature's

God. What more exhilarating to the animal spirits—what more refreshing to the care-worn mind—than the pastoral scene, when “the time of the singing of birds is come”?

And again, as the variations of light and shade, from the bright effulgence of the noon-day sun to the murky darkness of midnight, affect the mind variously through the sense of sight, so also the varied tones of natural sounds affect the mind differently through the sense of hearing. Such is the mutual adaptation of all God's works to one another, that all things on the earth being made for the service of man, and man's faculties being made to sympathise with them, they are intended to give us satisfaction, and by creating in us pleasurable emotions, to induce us to glorify the God who made them. And thus, deriving through the medium of the senses such glowing sensations from the infinitely varied objects around us, *we* are emphatically called upon to praise the Lord, because of the immeasurably greater faculties we possess for so doing: the faculties of reason, speech, and song. No inarticulate sounds, however charming, and no instrument of art, however perfect, can compare in melody of tone and power of expression with the musical faculty of the human voice, when duly cultivated: and it is with this faculty of voice and song we are emphatically called upon to praise the Lord, and to experience pleasure ourselves and communicate it to others in so doing; while at the same time, when done in a proper spirit, we are rendering an acceptable oblation to God.

II. But to proceed to the second consideration, viz.: *That musical sounds producing certain effects upon us, musical instruments are an excitement to our hearts, prompting us to the expression of the praises of God.*

If natural sounds are given by God wherewith to praise him and to awaken man's faculties of thought and reflection, can artificial sounds be expected to produce similar results? Is there any correspondence between the music of nature and the music of art? Experience is a sufficient answer to these enquiries.

The invention of musical instruments must be attributed to the pleasure derived from the musical sounds of nature; and the early and universal use of them proves indisputably man's love of musical sounds whether natural or artificial. The rudest nations, as well as the most civilized, have ever had their musical instruments, and have used them chiefly in their religious rites. In proportion as civilization has advanced, and the fine arts have been cultivated, nations have improved upon the original pipe and string, and by refining tones and combining them in successive harmonies, have at length produced that fine concord of sounds which with the varied modulations of musical skill, thrill upon the ear and affect the heart. And as the more the human faculties are cultivated, so in general, the more capable are they of discrimination, and the more delight we find in the exercise of them; so, the more the ear is cultivated to discriminate nice distinctions in sounds, the more do we appreciate

exquisite tones whether of melody or harmony.

Indeed Music (or what deserves the name) is one of the enchantments of life, chasing anxious care by a pleasing arrest of the attention and occupation of the sense. It can adapt its tones and measures to moody melancholy and render the musings of the troubled heart endurable: it can equally adapt itself to the animation of youthful gaiety, and enhance its joy. It furnishes an important incitement to the battle-field, and stimulates the bravery and patriotism of mighty hosts: and it can equally accommodate itself to the funeral procession, and add solemnity to our most solemn reflections.

But mighty as is the influence of music in all its departments, enhancing our feelings in all the various emotions of which we are capable; and much as its influence is appreciated in the various scenes of human life; its highest excellence—its most exalted sphere, is in sacred song and devotional exercise. In other tones and measures it is soothing—or exhilarating—or spirit-stirring only; but in the service of God it is moreover sublime.

In the dance, it lifts the heart to giddy forgetfulness—in the merry song too, it produces a joyous levity—and in all the various grades of secular music, it exercises an influence, but only on our earthly tendencies: while in the sacred exercises of holy worship—in the praise and prayer and holy meditation of the sanctuary, it lifts the soul upwards, and enables it to soar aloft amid heavenly scenes, forgetful of earth, its cares and pleasures.

In whatever sphere music is employed, its property appears to be to enhance the degree of existing feeling; and therefore it heightens devotional feeling.

Surely then, it must be, because musical sounds affect the soul, and are pleasurable to us, that God has sanctioned the use of musical instruments in divine worship; as I shall presently proceed to shew. If they can be employed as auxiliaries to our devotional feelings,—if they can rouse and animate our hearts to worship God, it is no wonder that we should be directed to “sing unto the Lord with the harp”—“with trumpets and cornets.” If the music of art, borrowed as it is from the music of nature, and combining in delightful harmony with the human voice, can make us take more delight in singing the praises of God, it is only what we should expect, that God should consecrate this art to his service, and that the Psalmist should bid us “sing unto the Lord, and make a joyful noise to the Rock of our salvation.” It is, doubtless, because of its peculiar influence upon man’s sensibilities, that God has sanctioned its use in divine worship. Poetry, the most sublime, adorns a large portion of the sacred Book; architecture, sculpture, and decorative painting, were of old, and are still, available to the service of God by rendering his temples honourable in the eyes of all men: but of all the fine arts, none is so effective, none so suitable to this end, as music; none seizes so rapidly, so universally, and so powerfully upon our sensations. In the sanctuary it can cheer the downcast, soothe

the afflicted, solemnise the frivolous, and stimulate the indolent mind; it can arouse the indifferent, and inspire the dull: it can call into exercise the dormant faculties of the mind indisposed to the worship of God, and induce the heart to put forth its energies, and attempt the work of praise and adoration.

It is a great mistake to suppose that religious emotions are perfectly unconnected with and independent on natural sensations. Some consider that religious impressions are produced without the intervention of natural agency, or they limit the agency entirely to certain ordained means of grace. But they forget that there are frequently to be observed certain peculiar pre-disposing circumstances: all ordered in the wisdom of providence. Before religious impressions have taken place, commonly there has been some preparation of the natural feelings: it may be some affliction—some source of sorrow—or some kindly association with persons already imbued with a sense of religion; something in short that has produced a softening effect upon the heart.

And this is the way God commonly works with the careless unconverted sinner. The heart must be won: and the way to the heart is not by producing *intellectual conviction* of divine truth, but by producing *emotion*. The heart is the citadel to be stormed, not the head; and the way to the heart is by producing emotion. There must be a softening influence. The persuasive tones of affectionate eloquence we know to be one ordinary means or-

daigned of God, and music is akin to this very means—nay, there is music in this pathetic eloquence, and it is music which gives it its charm.

And as the music of the human voice gives effect to appeals to the heart, and is unquestionably a medium, although not in itself an efficacious means, for producing impression; so music of a more artificial character used in combination with religious truths, is evidently calculated to pave the way for the admission of those divine truths into the heart.

This, then, is the use of music in the worship of God: it awakens and stimulates the best affections of our nature. And how much do we need stimulus to sacred occupations! Naturally we delight not in the contemplation of God and heavenly things: but we do naturally love the concord of sweet sounds, and through them we may be lured to the contemplation of sacred themes. We rather shrink from approach to God, and God will draw us towards him by the silken cords of music and song. Man unawakened to the fact of his sinful condition and the certainty of a day of reckoning, robs God of his sacred day, and seeks some scene of sinful folly to wile away the time:—and God by music and song makes his House to be joyful with the sweet sounds of praise to allure him to a scene of sacred joy. Thus the careless sinner is introduced to solemn thoughts of God; learns lessons of divine truth; is taught his need of repentance and faith; is softened down to penitence and prayer, and begins to delight in the sacred occupation of praise and thanksgiving in the House of God.

And while sweet sounds are calculated thus to awaken the careless, they also stir up the oft-drowsy hearts of such as have already delighted in worshipping and serving the Lord their God.

The varied tones of sweet and solemn harmony proceeding from the majestic organ chastise the wandering imagination on entering upon our sacred work ; our attention is arrested and called off from other things : a holy awe subdues the mind, and we are prepared for the solemn act of worship : our faculties are summoned as it were to a devout attitude, and our affections won to holy themes.

It thus appears that musical sounds, whether they be the music of nature, or the music of art, are adapted to exercise a certain influence upon the human soul, and are beneficially employed to aid our devotions. And these considerations will be enforced, and impressed upon our minds, by referring as we shall now proceed to do, to the explicit authority for the use of musical instruments in public worship in some instances recorded in the Sacred History.

III. Holy Scripture records its use and sanctions its employment.

It appears that the inventor of musical instruments was an ante-diluvian. We read (Gen. iv. 21) that "Jubal was the father of all such as handle the harp and organ." While the brevity of the divine record of the first sixteen centuries of the world scarcely allows more than a passing notice of the worthies of the antediluvian world, we have this striking notice

of one as the founder of the musical art. As the "father of all such as handle the harp and organ," it appears he was not so much the inventor of musical instruments, as one eminent for performing upon them; and as the leading professor of those days instructing as a father a numerous band of aspirants to musical excellence. But while he and his pupils were swept away with the flood of the divine anger, his art perished not. Whether the family of Noah or a future generation revived the art we know not; but we find that in the time of Moses musical instruments were in use, and employed for sacred purposes. For immediately upon the escape of the Israelites from Egypt, we find mention of a whole band of musicians, male and female, headed by Moses and Miriam the prophetess, the sister of Aaron, who "took a timbrel in her hand; and all the women went out after her with timbrels and with dances," singing that triumphant song of Moses, praising the Lord God for his power and goodness in delivering them out of the hands of the Egyptians. (Exod. xv. 1.) "Then sang Moses and the children of Israel this song unto the Lord, and spake saying, I will sing unto the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously: the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea." And here we find the precedent for the antiphonal chant, which has been the custom from the earliest age of music in the Christian Church: for we read (ver. 21) that "Miriam and the women, when they had taken their timbrels, answered them" (taking up the chorus responsively to Moses and the men) "Sing ye

to the Lord, for he hath triumphed gloriously : the horse and his rider hath he thrown into the sea."

Here, then, we have a striking fact as to the employment of music and song on the first great occasion of the assembled multitude of the Church of Israel—on their deliverance from the cruel bondage of Egypt—and a glorious chorus it was ; for it appears they all sung, men and women, Moses the prophet and Miriam the prophetess taking the lead. And if Moses, the prophet—the ministering servant of the Lord—the leader of the people, was instructed in the art of singing, to lead off the chorus, why should not every prophet or priest of the Lord be qualified to do the same ? And if Miriam, the sister of Moses—the prophetess, was similarly qualified, and took the lead in the response, why should Christian ladies be afraid to let their voices be heard in the congregation of Christian worshippers ?

But we must proceed to notice the peculiar provision made for the musical performance of public worship, when the Israelites had obtained a peaceful settlement, and they had repose to attend properly to such matters. David being seated on the throne proceeded to arrange Church matters in a manner becoming their improved condition as a nation : and amongst other important arrangements, he instituted and established a choir composed chiefly of Levites, but including some of the priests, who were to minister in courses or turns with instruments of music. (1 Chron. xvi. 4—6.) "And he appointed certain of the Levites, to minister before the ark of the Lord, and to record, and to thank and praise the

Lord God of Israel. Asaph the chief, and next to him Zechariah, Jeiel, and Shemiramoth, and Jehiel, and Mattithiah, and Eliab, and Benaiah, and Obededom : and Jeiel with psalteries and with harps ; but Asaph made a sound with cymbals ; Benaiah and Jahaziel the priests with trumpets continually before the ark of the Covenant of God."

The choir thus established for the tabernacle was prepared for the service of God in the glorious temple built by Solomon : and it appears that the number of Levites employed as musicians, vocal and instrumental, at the time Solomon came to the throne, was no less than "four thousand" who "praised the Lord with the instruments, which I made, said David, to praise therewith." (1 Ch.xxiii. 5.) These were divided into twenty-four courses or bands, so that a suitable number were employed at a time, and probably there was a constant succession of praise going on in the house of the Lord day and night. We have every reason to believe that the music and singing of the Jewish worship was as perfect as their poetry. And as the poetry of the Jewish scriptures stands unrivalled for sublimity and beauty, and Jehovah inspired the writers of the psalms for his worship, we may well conclude that under the direction of so divinely inspired a poet as David was, he acted under the same divine influence in the appointment and regulation of the musical expression of his sacred poetry, and that more than an ordinary amount of skill in music was acquired by the choir of the temple of the only true God.

This provision for the worship of God by his ancient people was evidently preserved as an integral part of their service until their captivity in Babylon, when in their sadness "they hung their harps upon the willows;" and there we find their heathen conquerors admiring their musical and poetical skill, and asking as a favour, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion;" and how pious—how beautiful—how affecting—the reply: "How can we sing the Lord's songs in a strange land?" Yes, doubtless the musical services of the temple were preserved, as much as any other portions of their service—all of which were more or less neglected by their declining zeal in the service of God and by their idolatries.

But when other things were reformed, the musical department was reformed also, as we read was the case in the times of Hezekiah and Josiah; (2 Ch. xxix. 25—28. xxxiv. 12. xxxv. 15) and after the return from captivity, by the restorers of the temple, Ezra and Nehemiah. (Ezra iii. 10, 11. Neh. vii. 44. x. 39. xii. 27—29)

Surely then there is a marked importance given to music in the Jewish worship as more or less essential to the due expression of praise and adoration, thanksgiving and prayer. Seeing such abundant provision was made for it, and such pains taken to restore it, when it fell into neglect, it must have had the divine sanction as a matter of some importance.

It cannot be looked upon as among the rites and ceremonies of the Mosaic economy which were done away by the new dispensation, for it was appointed before these. It was one of those matters which had

its origin in natural principles; and hence, music and song were in use for the purposes of divine worship long before the giving of the law. And it would be strange indeed that the Christian Church should be intended to present a chilling aspect to a world it has to win, and to endure unceasing persecution and tribulation, uncheered by the joyous and spirit-stirring strains of music and song, when the glimpses vouchsafed us of the blissful state to which we aspire, shew us that even there, where there is no sin to check the flow of holy love, and no sorrow to need the enlivening influence of melody, the redeemed saints from earth mingle their voices with the angelic hosts, and aid their vocal harmony with instruments of heavenly tone; and thus each "with the harps of God" sing "the song of Moses, the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb" by whose blood they were redeemed.

And if the birth of the Redeemer was announced to the sons of earth by the enlivening anthems of the heavenly hosts, as if calling upon us, for whom the Saviour is sent, to sing with heart and voice, "Glory to God in the highest"—can it be of little importance whether we discipline ourselves to this heavenly exercise or not? or can it be a matter of indifference whether we raise our hallelujahs with *rude*, or with *cultivated* art in an earthly sanctuary, when in all things it behoves us to aim at as perfect a performance as possible of all Christian obligations, and therefore at as perfect an expression as possible of that praise and adoration which is perpetually due to that God who hath made and who upholds

us and all things—who hath loved us with an everlasting love, who hath redeemed us with his precious blood, and who by his Spirit is aiming to sanctify and prepare our hearts to unite in seraphic song and rapturous chorus as one of the blessed occupations of the saints made perfect?

It would be travelling out of the scope of this introductory lecture to enter upon the History of the Music of the Christian Church, whether of ancient or modern times. I need only assert the fact that so far as Church records enable us to ascertain, the Music of the Church has ever kept pace with the progress of the art, and has indeed taken the lead, so as to have been the cultivator of the art.

My object now will be to point out to you the peculiar importance of music in our worship, from

4. The construction of the Liturgy of the Church evidently requiring it.

The structure of our admirable Liturgy is such as to render all the members of the Church,—young or old, learned or unlearned—intelligent worshippers; each one being required to share audibly in the service. And while this remark applies equally to the act of prayer and praise, it is more especially to our purpose to remark that the work of praise occupies a larger portion of the service than that of prayer and supplication. And this is according to the best models of the primitive Church, and in strict accordance with scripture precedents. “Psalms, hymns, and doxologies, all being songs of praise, fill up the liturgies of the ancient Church, as far as

can be judged from the remains and ruins of them;"* and our own liturgy being formed after the same model, consists of the same materials of praise and thanksgiving. "But how shall we know what the Catholic Church hath always done in this case? Must we read over the councils, consult the fathers, and search the records of the Church in all ages? No; we need not give ourselves the trouble; for whatsoever means of grace and salvation have been used by the Catholic Church in all ages, the same, and none else, are to this day used by our own. Insomuch that, if we do but cast our eye upon the Church we live in, we may in that, as in a mirror, behold the constant practice of the universal Church, in all things necessary to men's salvation."† Such being the nature of our admirable forms of worship, what is the most natural and the most scriptural mode of expression for such acts of divine worship? What mode was contemplated and intended by the compilers of our liturgy?

In answer to these enquiries I may boldly answer that singing, not saying, the praises of God is most natural, most scriptural, and most accordant with the intention of the compilers of the liturgy.*

* Dr. Bisse's *Rationale on Cathedral Worship*.

† Bishop Beveridge. *Serm. 4. vol. i. fol. p. 33. Lon. 1729*.

* "In a general way, no doubt, the intentions of the Church are expressed in such rubrics of the Book of Common Prayer as relate to the use of Music: but the meaning of the rubrics is very far from being obvious. On the one hand they make no allusion to certain choral practices which, beyond dispute, are authorised by the Church, and

It is most *natural*, because our attempts to offer acceptable praise and adoration to the Most High ought certainly to be of the most excellent and exalted kind of which we are capable. If the human voice was created wherewith to praise the Lord God, and if it is made capable of a vast variety of expression, to suit the emotions of our hearts—there must be some modes of expressing praise more suitable than others. How manifest is the difference of the same voice when speaking in commendation of a person, and when speaking in censure! And should not the most excellent and exalted mode be employed when expressing our sense of the greatness and goodness of the Almighty God? If he has given us the faculty of song and musical

intended to be observed; while, on the other, they give directions, which, if interpreted literally, and according to the modern use of words, seem to be at variance with the established manner of choral service in cathedral and collegiate churches. * * * * *

* * * In the first place, there is an implied as well as an expressed meaning of the rubrics relating to Music. In this, as in other matters of ecclesiastical order, ancient custom is assumed to be still in force, unless it has been set aside by special enactment. * * * Secondly, the terms in which the rubrics are expressed, must be interpreted according to their technico-ecclesiastical meaning in the sixteenth century. * * * It was not necessary, therefore, that the direction "to be sung" should in every case be prefixed to portions of the office really intended to be sung in plain tune. To "say" or to "use and say" the service, signified that it was to be said after the use of some diocese or province, which use was one of singing as well as saying."—*Editor's preface to "The Order of the Daily Services, &c. with Plain-tune."*—Burns; 1843.

skill for our own delight, and for our seasons of joy, shall we not suppose that he also himself delights in hearing us rejoice in Him in the same manner? Surely musical expression, which is the mode of angels and saints made perfect, must be the most natural mode of presenting our worship to God."*

But it is also the most *scriptural*. We scarcely meet with subjects of praise in the Holy Scriptures, without some direct or implied mention of song as the mode of expression. Indeed our English word "Psalm" is derived from a Greek verb, *ψαλλω*, signifying "to strike the lyre," or to sing with a musical instrument. And our word "Hymn" is from another Greek word, *ᾠμος*, signifying "a poem written for the praise of God."

And "it is probable that in the earliest ages poetry was uniformly sung; the most ancient prayers, which were in fact metrical hymns, as those of Orpheus, were inseparable in their performance.

* "It is an acknowledged principle of conduct, by which the noblest and most virtuous natures have ever been governed that in every pursuit the aim should be directed to the very highest pitch of excellence, however unattainable may be the perfection of the example held up to contemplation. This principle the Church at all times, and in England particularly, has maintained, in her sustentation of God's service; in the words, the forms, and the accessories of her Liturgy; in the structure of the Temples wherein she worships; and specially in that voice of prayer and praise wherewith she imitates the choir of heaven."—*Lectures on the Cathedral Service, by the Rev. John Jebb, A.M., Prebendary of Donoghmore.*—Rivington.

from music; the heroic poems of Homer and others were delivered in a recitative, resembling our chant; and the speeches of tragedy were sung."* I refer to these facts as illustrating the meaning of the original words among the Greeks: and as therefore shewing what is the correct meaning to attach to the words "Psalm" and "Hymn" as used in the sacred Scriptures. And the frequent recurrence of the direction or exhortation, "*O sing unto the Lord—sing praises,*" and that with the mention of instrumental accompaniments, puts the matter beyond doubt, that the true scriptural idea of the act of praise is that of a musical expression and not that of mere reading or reciting.

"Of all modes of using the Psalms in divine worship," says the Rev. W. H. Havergal (one of the most sterling composers of Church Music of the present day, and also a profound thinker and accurate writer on the subject) in his "*Remarks on Chants and Chanting,*" "to chant them is unquestionably the most accordant with Hebrew custom, with apostolical injunction, and with primitive practice. When, therefore, the Reformers of our Church compiled the Book of Common Prayer in English, they were desirous that the Psalms should everywhere be chanted." * * "In the present day it is almost forgotten, that, by '*singing Psalms,*' both the Bible and our Liturgy mean, not singing a *metrical version* of the Psalms, but *chanting* a literal *prose* translation of them; such as the Sep-

* Jebb's Lectures.

tuagint translation provided for the Grecian Jews, and the translation in the Book of Common Prayer for the members of our Church. Hence, it follows that, by the disuse of chanting, the great body of Christian worshippers rarely *sing Psalms*. We are strangely content, not merely with feeble paraphrases, and imperfect imitations of them, but even with scanty portions of those very substitutes: for instead of spiritedly chanting an entire Psalm of ordinary length, we spend as long time as that would require, in drawling over four or five verses in metre."

Now if the principles of nature originally dictated the mode of shewing forth the praises of God, and if Holy Scripture has sanctioned—nay, directed—the same mode; and if, in the earlier ages of the Christian Church, this same mode was adopted and continued through successive ages: need we wonder that the Reformers of the Church, the compilers of our forms of public devotion, should adopt the same mode, and so construct our daily services, as to involve the very same mode of expression, which nature, divine precept, and ancient practice, all concurred to point out? *The intention* of the compilers of the Prayer-Book I take to be, that the praises of God should be sung, wherever it should be possible to do so; but, at the same time, permission is given to recite or say, where they cannot be sung—wherever there should not be sufficient musical skill, or aids to singing. This intention is evident from the scriptural expressions and psalms in the services. For immediately after our confes-

sion of sin, and the declaration of remission of our sin, and the lifting up our hearts to God in prayer with the words our Lord has taught us to use; we prepare to enter upon our work of praise by saying "O Lord, open thou our lips, and our mouth shall shew forth thy praise." And then the first song of praise (Ps. xcvi.) for daily Morning Prayer, begins "O come let us *sing* unto the Lord, let us heartily rejoice in the strength of our salvation." In like manner, in the Evening Service, we have for the first constant psalm, the ninety-eighth, beginning "O sing unto the Lord a new song, for he hath done marvellous things."

So much for the intention of the Church as to the musical expression of our praises to Almighty God. And when we add, as a corroboration, the historical fact, that when the reformation took place in the Liturgy, a similar reformation was made in the Music of the Church, in order to render it more solemn and suitable to the sacredness of divine worship; and that under the patronage and fostering care of King Henry VIII. Edward VI. and Queen Elizabeth, a school of Church Music was produced of unrivalled sublimity and beauty: and moreover, that the celebrated Archbishops of that time, Cranmer and Parker, were themselves musicians, and directed the style of music to be used:—we cannot but assent to the position, that our Church services are constructed with an especial view to a musical expression, and were intended by them to be sung rather than said, wherever circumstances would permit.

Such, then, are the considerations which appear to me, and I hope to you, to establish the importance of Church Music: and I would now detain you a little longer, while I apply these considerations, with a view to urge upon you the importance of *cultivating* Church Music.

If these things are so: if the varied music of nature by its pleasing effect upon our frame, has dictated the invention of musical instruments; and if musical instruments concur with the faculty of song in heightening the expression of praise: if the principles of nature—the reverence due to Almighty God—the testimony of Holy Scripture—ancient practice—and the directions of our own Church, all unite in declaring the propriety, the suitableness, of a musical expression of the praises due to God; how can we resist the force of all this evidence for the importance of Church Music?

But alas! for the Church—alas! for the community in which the Church is placed—alas! for the honour of God—alas! for our own enjoyment of the worship of God—how grievously has it come to pass, that sheer neglect has occasioned all these considerations to be overlooked by the Church at large; and with here and there an exception, the members of the Church have not only been deprived of the proper enjoyment of our beautiful liturgy, but have become so familiarised with the tame, feeble, monotonous mode of uttering the praises of God, as to lose all due appreciation of the proper mode, and to consider its restoration an innovation! Habit has rendered them satisfied with this inert tameness: just

as habit may so far reconcile persons to the gloom of a darkened room as to make them shun the cheerful sunshine. And thus, as the bird becomes satisfied, and even pleased, with the limited flutterings of his cage; and when set at liberty to soar aloft, prefers to return to his narrow prison: the pinioned worshipper of the cheerless unmusical church dreads to soar aloft in heaven-born harmony, and prefers his unsuitable mode of tame recital, or inaudible whisper, or even perfect quiescence!

While I deplore the robbing God of the honour due to his holy Name—and while I pity the deprived worshipper the absence of holy joy he might otherwise attain—and while I lament the ignorant prejudice which would forbid a return to the true and proper mode of praise; I might cry shame upon the lukewarmness of the Church, which has suffered every advance in musical science to be employed upon secular subjects, to the neglect of its own divinely-appointed sphere—the shewing forth the praises of God: I might cry shame upon the rulers and ministers of the Church, for not appropriating this divine art, with all its capability of scientific improvement, to the service of God, who gave it wherewith to honour himself: I might cry shame upon the members of the Church who are lovers of Music, and who cultivate every style of secular, to the neglect of sacred music: and I might cry shame upon the indolence and apathy of those members of the Church, who while attending her services shun every exertion of voice and give a listless attention to the devotions of others. The Church

should now, as of old, take the lead in musical skill, and by its due appropriation to sacred subjects, give a pervading tone to all other music used for secular enjoyments.

By this neglect of the Church, music has lost more than half its power and influence for good; sacred melody has given place to frivolous strains; the rich, full, grandeur of slow and solemn harmony, which entrances the soul and fills it with pleasing awe, has given place to rapid transitions, startling modulations, and ingenious discords, strung together in unmeaning succession with a view to astonish rather than to please. A false taste has sprung up and been encouraged for all that is light and unmeaning or operatic; and thus music neglected and cast out of the sanctuary, has been nursed in scenes of pleasure and dissipation, till it seems to be forgotten that there was ever any connection between music and religion. The genius of music, bound hand and foot by its original patron, has been handed over to Satan the prince of this world, to do what he likes with it, and the consequence is, that we in vain search for good sterling Church Music among modern productions, with here and there an exception, which proves the rule.

Let the music of the sanctuary, then, be restored—let religion be (what it originally was) the guardian and patron of music—and let music be, as formerly, the handmaid of the Church; and the Church will no longer be robbed of its legitimate attractions: and her services adorned—not indeed with meretricious ornaments like those of Rome—

but with the legitimate strains of holy joy, will be the delight of her sons and daughters, and the admiration of a world it seeks to win. Let the chaste and sublime compositions of better days be rendered familiar to our ears, and we shall imbibe a correct taste: let our professors of music study the old masters, as painters and architects do, and graft upon the sterling merit of the ancient ecclesiastical style such modern advances in the science as its progress as a science affords; and I see no reason why the present age, so rich in works of art, and the present generation, so abounding in good taste in other departments, should not arrive at a genuine taste, and an ardent love of sterling ecclesiastical music.

If my audience partake in some degree of my sense of the importance of this subject, they will be ready to ask "what can be done?" and "what can we do to make a movement towards so desirable an end, as this reform of church music—this proposed restoration of a genuine taste for ecclesiastical music?"

Glad indeed should I be to find that such a sentiment pervaded this large assembly. It would be an important step towards the attainment of the end in view, to find that a goodly number of any community were convinced of the propriety of cultivating a due musical expression of our beautiful liturgy—of the necessity of some effort—of the duty of a due adornment of the service of God—of the privilege of taking even a humble share in this holy work. If only there is found a willingness to make

the attempt, we have all the materials necessary for an immediate commencement. We have the best foundation at hand, in the old stores—or rather the remnants of the compositions—of the old masters. Let us become acquainted with these first: let those who can sing unite together for practice: and those who are not too old to learn, begin to learn to sing; and those who cannot learn, listen to those who can: and we may hope to do something in the way of improvement. And this is just what we propose to do by the formation of a Church Choral Society which it is intended to introduce to your notice this evening.

It is beyond all doubt that there is much musical talent in Bradford, as in other parts of the West Riding of Yorkshire; not so, I understand, in the East Riding: and I have no doubt there is much general love of music. Now if this talent can be collected and cultivated—if this general love of music can be directed to form a good taste—and if talent and taste can be brought to bear upon the service of God in the sanctuary, we shall just gain the desired end, and in due time be qualified to offer the incense of praise, not in a careless and slovenly, but in an acceptable manner to Him who accepts the hallelujahs of his Church on earth, as of the Church triumphant in heaven.

It appears to me that we have in the existence of our Church Institution a peculiar facility for carrying out this object. For here we have a common centre and bond of union for all who may be interested in this or any other object of Church interest:

Here we have the means, the facility, of collecting together and bringing to bear all the information—the talent—the skill—of a large community. Here we can form a school of music, and I hope raise a standard of excellence: we can make one common stock of our several portions of musical knowledge, and give and take, till we are all equal in amount, profiting by one another. And this is just the way to arrive at excellence in any branch of knowledge—by collecting all the knowledge and information we can into one focus, and then all share alike. It is in this way the Royal Academies of sculpture, painting, and music, render the fine arts progressive, and disseminate good taste.

If, then, we can bring together all our available means of instruction, by Lectures from one and another as opportunity offers—by the skilful performance of music with the collected talent of Bradford—by critical examination of different compositions, and by comparing one composer with another; we shall gradually learn to distinguish good music from bad, and so form a correct taste. And then again, by the assistance of professional skill, we shall get our bad tastes corrected—our awkward habits of singing quizzed a little, and laughed out of us. And even this is a point of more advantage than some think:—native talent is sometimes apt to think a little too much of itself; and thus a country choir, or even a town one, may fancy they can sing better, or at least as well as, any body of singers whatever, because they have never heard any sing better than themselves. Now

a little professional instruction, guidance, and correction, would be of great advantage to such people, and it might do them good to find out that there are others who can sing as well as themselves, and perhaps a little better. I would hope that those who are engaged as singers at the several churches of the parish are not so fully satisfied with their present amount of skill as to think they are not capable of improvement: I must say that the general character of the singing I have heard in Bradford far surpasses any thing I have heard in the South from persons possessing only the same advantages of instruction.

But we ought all to aim at perfection—we ought to set before us the best models—and never be content with present attainments.

Imperfection, in the performance of music especially, is more intolerable than in any other art: an occasional discord where concord is expected, grates upon the ear terribly—if *one* sings only a little out of tune it spoils the whole harmony. Now all these imperfections can only be got rid of, by well superintended practice. Faults in manner and style are discovered and corrected—the ear becomes more sensitive, to distinguish semitones and quarter-tones: in short, our singing becomes more and more perfect, by well-conducted practice. And let it be borne in mind that unless the music of our Churches is tolerably perfect in its performance, it becomes a hindrance rather than an aid to devotion.

But let it not be thought that correct singing by the choirs of our Churches is all that is wanted.

We want much more than this to render the worship of God worthy of Him. If, as I have shewn, music is intended to enhance our holy joy, and to aid our expression of praise; and if our public service is so constructed that all the worshippers have their part to perform; it follows that all must reform: all must praise—all must sing, to produce the desired effect. Not indeed that all are to exert themselves to the full extent of their voice; but to sing—to sing soberly, but audibly in general, whenever the choir sing, and to respond audibly whenever the choir respond. It is in this way alone that we can realise the intention of our liturgy, and in this way alone that we can really profitably participate in the service of God.

I trust, then, that very many members of our Church Institution, and others, will be found disposed to unite themselves into a Choral Society for the express purpose of cultivating the music of the Church; some to learn the divine art of singing—others to improve upon their present amount of acquirement: and that thus a school of good practical music will be formed for this extensive parish, which shall tend to elevate the standard of excellence in singing the services of the Church, and banish all excuse for the tameness and coldness which still pervades a large portion of our congregations. It should be felt a privilege to participate in the praises of our God and Saviour. It is a false shame to fear being heard to sing, when it is a universal duty to sing. And if any have skill in singing, they ought to be the more ready to conse-

crate that skill to the honour of God, and to employ it where it is most acceptable to him,—in his sanctuary. It is related of Peter the Great, of Russia, that he considered it a high honour to be allowed, as a layman, to read the lessons in his chapel, as he used frequently to do. And Sir Thomas More, while Chancellor of England, used habitually to put on a surplice, and sing with the choir in the Parish Church of Chelsea; and was accustomed to regard this his privilege of singing the praises of God, as a higher honour than the possession of his exalted temporal office.

Let us, then, all aim more and more to worship God with earnestness of heart and voice; and while we avail ourselves of these external aids to devotion, that we may the better shew forth his praise with our lips, I trust it will at the same time be an incentive to our shewing forth his praise in our lives. This, indeed, must follow as the true result of fanning the flame of our devotion. Let us, then, as enlightened Christians and members of a Church whose formularies teach us to dedicate to God the purest aspirations of the heart, and the choicest language of the lips, and “whose architecture symbolises the heavens, his dwelling-place”, “be ready and willing to give him the first-fruits of outward homage, in the reverent consecration to his praise of the best member that we have.”

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